

FROM THE BABYLON OF THE WEST

Bartolommeo Prignano, then Archbishop of Acerenza, and assistant to the Vice-Chancellor of the Holy See.

In the meanwhile, Gregory was ostensibly pushing on the preparations for his journey to Italy; but the most careful observers doubted whether he would have the strength of mind to overcome the obstacles that confronted him. In his despatch of July 17, Cristoforo da Piacenza informed Lodovico Gonzaga that a number of the papal officials had already started, and that Francesco Orsini was on the way to Rome to acquaint the Romans with the Pope's intentions, and to bid the feudatories of the Church be ready to meet his Holiness with fitting reverence at some port near Rome on September 20. ^{cc} Nevertheless, he is finding great obstacles to his setting out, for all the cardinals of this nation are against it, as also his own father and brothers, and I hear that the Duke of Anjou is coming to prevent his moving, if he can. I know not what to say. I see many signs that point to his going ; for the Lord Otho has already come with seven galleys and seven smaller ships, which are now at Marseilles. I hear that the galley belonging to the Commune of Ancona, upon which the Pope is to travel, is at present at Marseilles." ¹

Louis, Duke of Anjou, brother of the French king, an ambitious and unstable prince, arrived at the papal court, and found Catherine in possession of the Pope's mind. Gregory told him that, at all costs, in spite of his love for his native land, he was compelled, in the interests of the Church of God, to return to Rome. Either because his heart was really touched or because he hoped to use her influence for his own ends, Louis persuaded Catherine to come with him from Avignon to his castle of Villeneuve, to console his wife with her ministrations. Catherine stayed three days at Villeneuve, and so inflamed the Duke with ardour for the Crusade that he promised that, if the Pope called upon him to do so, he would himself raise an army and lead it across the seas at his own expense. He besought

¹ Oslo, I. doc. 124. Otho of Brunswick was the fourth husband of the Queen of Naples.